

*18 March 2006*  
*Saturday*

## **READINGS**

Psalm 23; Genesis 43:16-34; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24; Mark 5:1-20

## **DEVOTION**

As I look back on my life, I see many unhappy moments. My mom made some mistakes while raising three children. My sister died when I was 20 years old. In college, I had to work, which took away from having fun. I was living a life that if things were not perfect, then I wasn't happy. As you can quite imagine, I was unhappy most of the time. I was allowing situations, some petty, some not so petty, to dictate my happiness. I was discontent.

What I realize now is that you cannot control situations; however, you can control your response to them. In each case above and countless others I was unhappy because I had failed to be content. With my mother, I failed to appreciate the many good things she did. With my sister's death, I failed to thank God that I was blessed to have a sister for 18 years. With the college job, I failed to be grateful that it contributed to my education and kept me out of trouble. No situation I have ever experienced lacked something positive. What was lacking was my attitude.

In Psalm 23, David tells us to be content and gives reasons to do so. Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we can be content because the Lord is with us and provides us comfort. We can be content in the presence of our enemies because the Lord prepares a banquet before us.

We can find a good example of hardship and contentment in Genesis 37-50 which tells the story of Joseph. Joseph dreamed that one day his brothers would bow down to him. When he told this dream to them, they were angered and sold Joseph into slavery. He endured many hardships in Egypt, to include being unjustly imprisoned. Through this, Joseph remained faithful to God and content with his situation. Eventually, his dream came to fruition.

We too should be content with where we are in God's plan. There are many hardships here in Iraq, to include increased threats to our lives and being away from our families. During this Lenten season, take time to reflect on why God has placed you here and seek to serve him to the fullest. Be content with your current situation and know that it is all part of God's plan for you—choose to accept the goodness and love that follow you wherever you are and dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Prayer: Lord, teach us to be content. Help us to clearly see the goodness and love you provide us in every situation. Give us the strength and endurance we need to live our lives for you and finish the race you have set before us.

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